

ON CUTENESS.

Charles H. Robinson in Great Pictures Writes Entertainingly

ON A DELIGHTFUL SUBJECT.

The Cuteness of Young Things in the Animal Kingdom—The Sanity of the Nation, He Believes, Is Preserved Through the Cuteness of Children and the Unbending of the Mature Man to Romp and Rollo With the Babies.

There is an unrestrained freedom in the actions of the young of all the animal kingdom, which expresses the ideal of that absolute independence so much sought after by man, after he has reached the age of reason, but which he never seems to attain. In his swaddling clothes, the immature bit of the animal creation is utterly irresponsible for his acts, positively and even hilariously inconsequential in his movements—hence, we find him "cute."

Cuteness is the only word qualified to express the multifarious idiosyncrasies of organic atoms, whether they be of the species man, beast, bird, fish or insect. Even an infant, wriggling worm possesses a charm which brings grave and reverend scientists down on their marrow bones to inspect and admire. In my own salad days, long before the tender, yellowish white cotyledons of my embryonic days had become tinged with the greenness of heralded maturity, it was a constant pleasure to me to play with baby mud turtles. So awkwardly cute and so villainously, beautifully funny they were, that I could not resist practicing cruelties upon them to see them squirm, like the fond mother who was so transported by the cuteness of her darling babe that she hugged it to death. Infants, crabs, lobsters and clams were so irresistibly attractive to me that I often imperiled my hereafter by deserting Sunday school to hunt them and gloat over their very quintessence of cuteness.

It is not on account of their beauty that we admire young things, for they have none; they are merely raw, uncouth prototypes of perfect maturity; nor is any reason to be found in their subject, helpless and tender weakness, for there is not an infantile animal that will not defend itself. The microscopic baby clam will shut its shell down hard on an infinitesimal intruding hair, and a transparent, newly hatched mosquito will bend up its feeble proboscis in the vain effort to revengefully puncture the skin of the imitator hand raised to strike it down. Partridges just out of the shell will lie down on their backs and hold a concealing leaf over them to hide away from an approaching enemy. A thread-like worm will exude slipperiness to wiggle out of one's grasp. A baby elephant faintly trumpets its anger, and the small human kind roars and yells until the disturber of its peace takes alarm and flees in fright. Everything young in nature possesses some weapon of defence peculiar to its kind, and it is therefore proportionately as strong as the nature of its species.

In fact, cuteness is as cuteness does; this is the whole gospel of infantile comicality in an epigram. Did you ever see a flock of children, hundreds of them, of different and assorted sizes, come tumbling out of the schoolhouse of a great city? Perhaps, and if so, the buzzing and the frantic bewilderment of a swarm of bees who can not locate their queen is but a faint shadow. Hopping, skipping, dancing, shouting, young, ruddy and also pale-faced rascals, forgetting all about the pedagogical atmosphere they have just quitted. They are the little men of the nation, talk marbles, discuss football, argue, dispute, quarrel and fight. Sometimes they take one another's clothing and do other reprehensible things, but, looking at a small, independent bipeds from a distant corner, they possess a cuteness in their performances that drive one's thoughts far from business, politics and worry. It has often been a delight to wickedly indulge in the game of "pitch penny," and deliberately lose to the immature, embryonic doctors, lawyers, clergymen and statesmen, just to enjoy their frantic delight and extraordinary gestures at beating a grown man. "Say, mister, come around again to-morrow afternoon and we'll give you a chance to win your money back." Then they would notice one another and explode with laughter at the very idea of such a thing being liable to happen. The little cheats—I knew they were conspiring to beat me, but I didn't care. Their very cuteness so entranced me that I would willingly have goaded them into robbing a bank if I had thought they would enjoy it.

Then the little girls under like circumstances, all hippy-hopping, with their little slim legs nearly always in the air instead of on the ground, where Miss Prim declares they ought to be. Their Marguerites twirling and whirling and the curious little old womanish bunches of hair bobbing about in a chronic state of restless youthful spirits. They talk and gesticulate, but they do not fight or pitch pennies. They are little mothers, and they talk about dolls, housekeeping. They tell each other about the pinafores they have at home, and pull out of their pockets crude little bits of crocheting or needlework. "Oh, my, ain't that fine!" By and by a hurdy-gurdy, street piano or blind fiddler comes along. Then the little mites of women drop their books, and cover the sidewalk with their graceful dancing figures, and they keep it up as long as some bystander puts a silver of money in the piano grinder's hand. Of course all this is wrong, but it is awfully cute, everything that is cute and pleasant is usually wrong in the minds of some folks. But, thank goodness, they are not in the majority, so cuteness is not a sin.

It is my candid belief that were it not for the fact that men and women unbend and surrender to the attractions of youthful cuteness, the whole world would soon become a hades or a lunatic asylum. We are invigorated, refreshed, resurrected by a little sentimentality, not the stiff, stilted sort that is afraid to smile very wide for

fear of breaking some precious blood vessel, but one that will get down on the floor and play hobnob horse for a cute baby, or pretend to be a bear and hear his roars of ecstatic delight. It beats blue mass pills, and compels his liver to secrete sufficient bile to insure good digestion, sound sleep and a light heart, which means a good conscience.

There are lessons without number to be learned from children unconscious of playing the pedagogue. A little arguing in the right direction of the vein of thought or brain capacity, and the infant expands into a sage that would have provoked the admiration of Plato. Nay, the ancient sages confessed a competing wisdom among infants. "Out of the mouth of babes cometh forth wisdom" was the way the very wisest man that ever lived puts it. In my younger days I took a fancy to my neighbor's baby, and was always glad of an opportunity to have it all to myself. I would pour all kinds of stories into its little pink ears, and it always listened with intense gravity. So cutely wise would it sometimes look when imbibing blood-curdling confidences to its tender mind that I often set my teeth down hard on its cute little fingers to make it yell with pain. It was music to me, and it didn't kill the baby, for it still lives.

A little mite of a blonde girl was staggering along the street under the heavy load of nearly half a peck of potatoes in a paper bag, which she was tightly straining to her breast with both hands, lest her burden should drop. The big tears were coursing unrestrained down her chubby cheeks, caused by a small boy, who was following her up and prodding her in the back with a stick. The young villain had her at a disadvantage and was making the most of it.

"Why, why," said I, stopping in front of them, the wicked infant man keeping at a safe distance ready to retreat. "What does this mean? Is this little boy your brother, my child?"

"No, sir," sobbed the young thing. "I don't know him. He's been following me half a block, punching me in the back with a stick, and he won't stop."

"See here," said I, "you take these two pennies, buy two buns at the bakery and give this naughty boy one, and see what will happen."

She disappeared in the bakery with the small boy still pursuing her, and presently both came forth with their positions reversed. The little girl was hippy-hopping and smiling as she devoured her bun, while the boy was carrying the load of potatoes instead of the little girl. A penny bun had transformed him into a friend and a gentleman.

Two friends of mine, on a certain Halloween, conceived a brilliant idea, and proceeded to develop it.

"Let's take a lot of pennies and distribute them among the kids as 'lucky pennies' and see what they will do."

A couple of hundred of these small brazen caricatures of money did not go very far, for in less than ten minutes the news spread far and wide among the babes within a circuit of five blocks that two men were giving away lucky pennies. The procession that formed behind the two was fast approaching the five hundred mark, when a big policeman, learning the cause, laughed and ranged them in line until the good luck had been carefully distributed without any doubling up.

"Faith," quoth the jolly official to the purveyors of luck, "if ye take my advice ye'll get out of sight at once or ye'll have ten thousand kids onto ye within half an hour."

So they skipped around a convenient corner and hurried home, with here and there an urchin waylaying them to demand a lucky penny.

The writer earnestly believes that the sanity of the nation will be saved by the cuteness of children. In the morbid, fervid hustle after the almighty dollar, an occasional stop must be made to watch the joyous freshness and freedom of children, who spring up everywhere, and who are constantly at play, performing the most astonishingly comical antics. It would delight the heart of Jean Valjean to find so many poor little things obeying his command to "play, play, play." Give me the cute things of the earth to enjoy, and I care not who has the pate de foie gras and the money.

BLOWING HIS HORN

He Returns in Safety to Put His Mug in the Newspapers.

Mr. N. Horn, the much advertised merchant tailor, returned from his continental European trip recently and was tendered a banquet by his friends at the Hotel Reuter. The menu was not half so much enjoyed as the Horn blowing of the guest of honor. Striking the attitude of successful candidate in a lynching bee, he said:

"My Dear Friends: It gives me great pleasure to have you all here this evening to welcome me back to my home. (Applause.) To say that I am surprised to see this friendly gathering is putting it rather mild, and I hardly know what to say for the appreciation of your high regard for me. However, I will just tell you one thing which experience has taught me during the short period I was abroad, and that is, I am now convinced that this is the country for us all, because in this country every one is considered equal. Rich or poor, we are all one, while over there the poor have no chance at all. In conclusion, let me add that I am proud that I am a citizen of the United States of America. (Much Applause.) I thank you, gentlemen, one and all, for the honor conferred upon me this evening."

Entirely exhausted by this prolonged feat, he collapsed, and was slowly revived by a roast Smithfield ham au champagne, being held under his indignant proboscis by Messrs. Pierce, Marks, Goldstein, Israel, Stein, Bernstein, Wolf, and a dozen or two more of his immediate friends. While in Berlin the Kaiser Wilhelm passed on the other side of the street from his hotel and lifted his chapane to wipe his brow! In London, King Edward kept indoors until Horn left the metropolis. He had many more exciting adventures, but arrived in safety in Washington to put his mug in the newspapers and give the pressmen who operate the machines the Jim jams.

A GREAT HISTORY

Of a Great Race by Professor McCurdy.

THE OUTLOOK ON ISRAEL

Spiritual Development of the General Race—Their Moral Ideas Superior to their Military Achievements—Their Influences on Modern Life Surpassing that of Any Ancient People and Equal to the Greeks.

Why another history of Israel? One instinctively turns, if not for comparison, at least for an answer to this question to the preceding histories of the same people: Milman's "History of the Jews," the first to suggest to English readers that this people were a human people with a human history which could be written as the history of other peoples; Ewald's "History of Israel," a work of genius, which, despite some errors which subsequent investigations of later scholarship have corrected, is still unsurpassed and, to our thinking, without its equal as a spiritual nation; Dean Stanley's "History of the Jewish Church," large in its treatment, though limited, as its title indicates, in its scope, founded on Ewald and a brilliant interpretation of him to English readers, and still the best book for popular reading, if not for lay study of the Old Testament; Wellhausen's "History of Israel," the most notable of the distinct attempts to treat Biblical history from the evolutionary point of view and to recast the Biblical chronology so as to make it conform to recognized principles of moral and social development; W. Robertson Smith's "Old Testament in the Jewish Church" and "Prophecy of Israel," founded on Wellhausen as Stanley was on Ewald, yet independent—a history which one reads now with wonder how the Presbyterian Church of Scotland could ever find it matter for a heresy trial; Graetz's "History of the Jews," a history chiefly distinguished by the fact that it is written by a Jew, and has therefore the national color; Kent's volumes on Old Testament history and literature, the best series of brief treatises for the lay student who wishes to get in outline the results of modern historical and critical scholarship. Professor McCurdy's three volumes agree with these works of his predecessors in accepting the conclusions respecting the order of events and, in general, the date of the sacred books on which all alike must depend for the chief sources of their information. Indeed, it is difficult to see how Israel can be made the subject of historical treatment at all, as the word history is ordinarily understood, without assuming that the nation was subject to the general laws of development exemplified in the history of other nations, nor how, if this be assumed, the general conclusions of modern critics can be avoided. Thus Professor McCurdy assumes, as a matter of course, that the Levitical code was a gradual development, that Deuteronomy was produced in the reign of Josiah and was an efficient cause in bringing about the Reformation, and that Isaiah II, or the Great Unknown, prophesied toward the close of the Exile and in the beginning of the reign of Cyrus the Great. Professor McCurdy's history differs from that of his predecessors in two important particulars: It is pre-eminently a history of the people, and it connects their life closely with that of surrounding nations.

Green's "History of the English people" may almost be said to have introduced to English readers a new view of history, as the development of a people. This is the application of the democratic idea to historical narrative. The life of the people is more important than the achievements of their kings; in truth, the achievements of their kings are important only or chiefly as throwing light upon the development of the people. Professor McCurdy's predecessors have certainly done something, perhaps we should say a great deal, to trace the spiritual development of the Jewish people, but to this aspect of their history Professor McCurdy gives greater emphasis than his predecessors. He appears to care less for what Josiah did and less for the question who wrote Deuteronomy and when, than he does for the spiritual influence of the work among the people during the preceding reign of Manasseh, which made the production of Deuteronomy possible and indeed, almost necessitated it, and for the share which the people took in the reformation and the extent to which they were affected by it. This is the first distinguishing characteristic of this history; it is a study of the moral and intellectual development of an extraordinary race. Sometimes the author appears to us to allow too little for the phenomenon of genius and the effect which individual geniuses have on the common life of the people to whom they belong. But, in the main, his conclusions are eminently sane and sensible. The other characteristic is indicated by the somewhat clumsy title of his work, "History, Prophecy, and the Monuments." Far too much we off by themselves as though they lived in a wholly different world from our own. We have read and studied their history in the Bible in the same spirit of provincial exclusiveness in which they lived and in which their historians wrote. In fact, no nation liveth to itself and no nation dieth to itself, and this is as true of Israel as of any people. Their life made but one thread, though a thread composed of different strands interwoven with other threads in one historic pattern, and we can not truly understand the history of any one of these ancient peoples without understanding, at least in some measure, the history of all the others. Professor McCurdy's work is not merely a history of Israel, with occasional glances at neighboring nations, nor even a consideration of the incidental effect which neighboring nations had upon Israel. It is a history of Israel and her times, and it brings Israel into her due historic perspective, as it is seen by her moral grandeur, that by reason of her moral grandeur, she was a central figure in a drama in

which she seemed to play an unimportant part to those who measured the greatness of the nation by the size of its territory, the bigness of its population, the magnitude of its arms, or the apparent result of its military feats. In these respects and for these reasons Professor McCurdy appears to us to have made a real and valuable addition to that historical literature which deals with this peculiar people, the people whose moral ideas were as victorious as their military feats were insignificant, and whose influence on modern life surpasses that exercised by any other ancient people, unless possibly the Greeks are an exception. His style is clear, but somewhat too analytical for the ordinary reader. His analysis is, however, real, not merely formal; and if his method suggests the academic lecturer, as we think it does, and if it lacks in smoothness and rhythm, its somewhat too formal analysis adapts it to use as a text-book, and will aid the memory in retaining and recalling the substance of the author's thought.

Uses for Corn Stalks.

Corn may be grown for the stalks alone, some day, and not for the ears. Wouldn't it be funny to experiment for an earless corn? That is what it is likely to come to if the use for corn stalks keeps on developing. Just now it is neck and neck between the stalk and the ear as to which is the more valuable, so the wise farmer is making good money selling his cornfields instead of burning them off.

The uses of cornstalks are very many. The Agricultural Department has made public a bulletin showing that they may be used for these, among other purposes: A packing for warships, a high grade of writing paper, the basis for a smokeless powder, and cattle food made by grinding up the dry cornstalks and leaves to a powder and mixing it with cheap molasses.

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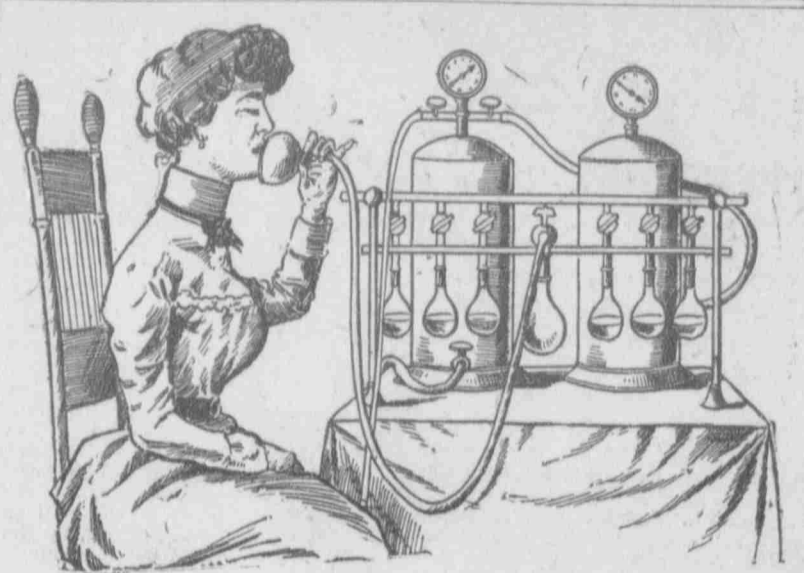
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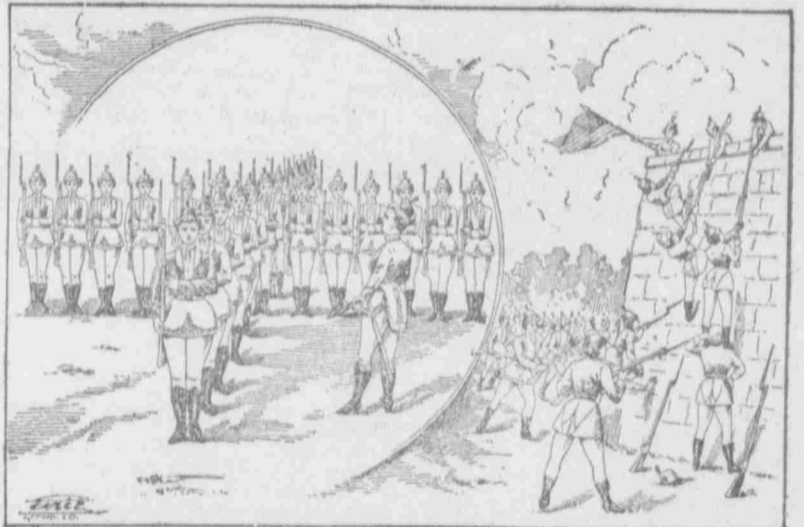
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